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THE COURTSHIP  
OF  
MILES STANDISH.







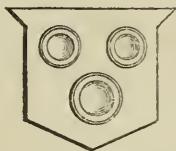
CHORLEY OLD CHURCH, LANCASHIRE.

THE BURIAL PLACE OF THE STANDISHES.



THE  
COURTSHIP  
OF  
MILES STANDISH,  
AND  
OTHER POEMS.

BY  
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.—This poem rests on a basis of historical truth. The house of Standish is one of the oldest in Lancashire. Ralph Standish fought at the battle of Agincourt; John helped to destroy Wat Tyler. Henry Standish, a Bishop of St. Asaph, had the courage to stand by Queen Catherine and assist her in resisting the famous divorce. John Standish wounded Wat when felled to the ground by the arm of Walworth, but Henry, the Bishop, resisted his royal namesake, when the latter was in great power.

Miles Standish—the hero of this poem—was the

descendant of a younger brother of this valiant race. The career of poor but daring spirits in the age of Elizabeth was often sought in the Low Countries, where the great question of Religious Liberty against the Spanish Inquisition was being settled on field and scaffold. It was the age of great events—the age of Elizabeth, of Alva, of the Armada, and of the Puritans. Among the soldiers sent over by the Queen of England to help the Dutch in that grand struggle for independence, Miles Standish drew his sword. He united the wisdom of a true statesman with the nerve and daring of a good soldier, qualities which fitted him in a pre-eminent degree to adorn the post which, when he left Leyden for America, he was called on to fill. In Holland he had learned to admire the devotedness and moral grandeur of the Puritans. Though he never joined their church, he was the staunch friend and sworn defender of that little band of heroic men and women who landed from the May

Flower in New England in the year 1620. As the "best linguist" among the pilgrims, he was qualified to treat with the Indians; and as the best soldier, he took the command in their expeditions. "His capital exploit," as the old chronicle terms it, was the salvation of the planters at Weymouth from extermination. The hostility of the Indians had been provoked by the injustice of some greedy London adventurers, who were striving to monopolise the advantages of the fur trade. The colony was saved by the wisdom and courage of Miles Standish. He died in 1656, at the age of 72.

He was twice married, and the tradition has been handed down, that some time after the death of his first wife, he employed the friendly services of John Alden to pay court in his name to a fair lady, one Priscilla Mullins, who, however, fell in love with his ambassador, and afterwards became his wife. Another lady, however, known to us only by the name of Barbara, consoled him for this mortification

by accepting the hand of one of the greatest and noblest men whom Providence ever raised up to fight the battle of Liberty in the Old World, and to lay the social foundation of the New.

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## THE COURTHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

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### I.

#### MILES STANDISH.

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of  
the Pilgrims,  
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive  
dwelling,  
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan  
leather,  
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the  
Puritan Captain.  
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands  
behind him, and pausing

Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of  
warfare,  
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the  
chamber,—  
Cutlass and corslet of steel, and his trusty sword of  
Damascus,  
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical  
Arabic sentence,  
While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece,  
musket, and matchlock.  
Short of stature he was, but strongly built and  
athletic,  
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles  
and sinews of iron ;  
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard  
was already  
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes  
, in November.

Near him was seated John Alden, his friend and  
household companion,

Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by  
the window ;

Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon com-  
plexion,

Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof,  
as the captives

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not  
Angles but Angels."

Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the  
May Flower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe  
interrupting,

Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish  
the Captain of Plymouth.

"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike wea-  
pons that hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or  
inspection !

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in  
Flanders ; this breastplate,

Well I remember the day ! once saved my life in a  
skirmish ;

Here in front you can see the very dint of the  
bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish area-  
bucero.

Had it not been of shear-steel, the forgotten bones  
of Miles Standish

Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in  
the Flemish morasses."

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not  
up from his writing :

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the  
speed of the bullet ;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and  
our weapon !”

Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of  
the stripling :

“ See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an  
arsenal hanging ;

That is because I have done it myself, and not left  
it to others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an  
excellent adage ;

So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and  
your inkhorn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, in-  
vincible army,

Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and  
his matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and  
pillage,

And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my  
soldiers !”

This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes,  
as the sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in  
a moment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain  
continued :

“ Look ! you can see from this window my brazen  
howitzer planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who  
speaks to the purpose,

Steady, straight-forward, and strong, with irre-  
sistible logic,

Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts  
of the heathen.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the  
Indians ;

Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they  
try it the better,—

Let them come if they like, be it sagamore, sachem,  
or pow-wow,

Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokama-  
hamon !”

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed  
on the landscape,

Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory breath of  
the east wind,

Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue  
rim of the ocean,

Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and  
sunshine.

Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on  
the landscape,

Gloom intermingled with light ; and his voice was  
subdued with emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded :

“ Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried  
Rose Standish ;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the  
wayside !

She was the first to die of all who came in the May  
Flower !

Green above her is growing the field of wheat we  
have sown there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of  
our people,

Lest they should count them and see how many  
already have perished ! ”

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down,  
and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books,  
and among them



Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and  
for binding ;

Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of  
Cæsar,

Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of  
London,

And, as if guarded by these, between them was  
standing the Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish  
paused, as if doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his con-  
solation and comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous cam-  
paigns of the Romans,

Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent  
Christians.

Finally down from its shelf he dragged the pon-  
derous Roman,

Seated himself at the window, and opened the book,  
and in silence

Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks  
thick on the margin,

Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was  
hottest.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying  
pen of the stripling,

Busily writing epistles important, to go by the May  
Flower,

Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest,  
God willing !

Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible  
winter,

Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of  
Priscilla,

Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan  
maiden Priscilla !

## II.

## LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

NOTHING was heard in the room but the hurrying  
pen of the stripling,

Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart of  
the Captain,

Reading the marvellous words and achievements of  
Julius Cæsar.

After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his  
hand, palm downwards,

Heavily on the page : “ A wonderful man was this  
Cæsar !

You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a  
fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both was  
equally skilful ! ”

Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the  
comely, the youthful :

“ Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his  
pen and his weapons.

Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he  
could dictate

Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his  
memoirs.”

“ Truly,” continued the Captain, not heeding or  
hearing the other,

“ Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar !

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right  
when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and  
many times after ;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand  
cities he conquered ;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has re-  
corded ;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator  
Brutus !

Now, do you know what he did on a certain occa-  
sion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the  
front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so  
closely together

There was no room for their swords ? Why, he  
seized a shield from a soldier,

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and  
commanded the captains,

Calling on each by his name, to order forward the  
ensigns ;

Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for  
their weapons ;

So he won the day, the battle of something-or-  
other.

That 's what I always say ; if you wish a thing to  
be well done,

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to  
others !”

All was silent again ; the Captain continued his  
reading.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying  
pen of the stripling

Writing epistles important to go next day by the  
May Flower,

Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan  
maiden Priscilla ;

Every sentence began or closed with the name of

Priscilla,

Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the  
secret,

Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the  
name of Priscilla !

Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,

Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the  
Captain of Plymouth :

“ When you have finished your work, I have something important to tell you.

Be not however in haste ; I can wait ; I shall not be impatient ! ”

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his letters,

Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention :

“Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,

Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish.”

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling his phrases :

“’Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it ;

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary ;

Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship.



Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the  
maiden Priscilla.

She is alone in the world ; her father and mother  
and brother

Died in the winter together ; I saw her going and  
coming,

Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed  
of the dying,

Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself,  
that if ever

There were angels on earth as there are angels in  
heaven,

Two have I seen and known ; and the angel whose  
name is Priscilla

Holds in my desolate life the place which the other  
abandoned.

Long have I cherished the thought, but never have  
dared to reveal it,

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for  
the most part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of  
Plymouth,

Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words  
but of actions,

Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of  
a soldier.

Not in these words, you know, but this in short is  
my meaning ;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of  
phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant  
language.

Such as you read in your books of the pleadings  
and wooings of lovers,

Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of  
a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired  
taciturn stripling,  
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, be-  
wildered,  
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject  
with lightness,  
Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still  
in his bosom,  
Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken  
by lightning,  
Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered  
than answered :  
“ Such a message as that, I am sure I should  
mangle and mar it ;  
If you would have it well done,—I am only repeat-  
ing your maxim,—  
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to  
others ! ”

But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn  
from his purpose,

Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain  
of Plymouth :

“ Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to  
gainsay it ;

But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder  
for nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of  
phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the place  
to surrender,

But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I  
dare not.

I 'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth  
of a cannon,

But of a thundering ‘ No ! ’ point-blank from the  
mouth of a woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to  
confess it!

So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,

Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases."

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added :

"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts me ;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship !"

Then made answer John Alden : "The name of friendship is sacred ;

What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you !"

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding  
the gentler,  
Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on  
his errand.

## III.

## THE LOVER'S ERRAND.

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on  
his errand,  
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths  
of the forest,  
Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and  
robins were building  
Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens  
. of verdure,  
Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and  
freedom.

All around him was calm, but within him commotion and conflict,

Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous impulse.

To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and dashing,

As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,

Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean !

“ Must I relinquish it all,” he cried with a wild lamentation,

“ Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion ?

Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped in silence ?

Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow



Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New  
England?

Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths  
of corruption

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of  
passion;

Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions  
of Satan.

All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!

This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me  
in anger,

For I have followed too much the heart's desires  
and devices,

Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols  
of Baal.

This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the  
swift retribution."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden  
went on his errand ;  
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled  
over pebble and shallow,  
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers bloom-  
ing around him,  
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonder-  
ful sweetness,  
Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves  
in their slumber.  
“Puritan flowers,” he said, “and the type of  
Puritan maidens,  
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of  
Priscilla !  
So I will take them to her ; to Priscilla the May-  
flower of Plymouth,  
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will  
I take them ;

Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and  
wither and perish,

Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the  
giver."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went  
on his errand ;

Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the  
ocean,

Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath  
of the east-wind ;

Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a  
meadow ;

Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice  
of Priscilla

Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan  
anthem,

Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the  
Psalmist,

Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting many.

Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the maiden

Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift

Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle,

While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its motion.

Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of Ainsworth,

Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,

Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a churchyard,

Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.

Such was the book from whose pages she sang the  
old Puritan anthem,

She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,  
Making the humble house and the modest apparel  
of home-spun

Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth  
of her being !

Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold  
and relentless,

Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight  
and woe of his errand ;

All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes  
that had vanished,

All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless  
mansion,

Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.

Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he  
said it,

“Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough  
look backwards;  
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of  
life to its fountains,  
Though it pass o’er the graves of the dead and the  
hearths of the living,  
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy endureth  
for ever!”

So he entered the house: and the hum of the  
wheel and the singing  
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his step  
on the threshold,  
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in  
signal of welcome,  
Saying, “I knew it was you, when I heard your  
step in the passage;  
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing  
and spinning.”

Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of  
him had been mingled  
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart  
of the maiden,  
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers  
for an answer,  
Finding no words for his thought. He remembered  
that day in the winter,  
After the first great snow, when he broke a path  
from the village,  
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that  
encumbered the doorway,  
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the  
house, and Priscilla  
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by  
the fireside,  
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her  
in the snow-storm.

Had he but spoken then ! perhaps not in vain had  
he spoken ;

Now it was all too late ; the golden moment had  
vanished !

So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers  
for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and  
the beautiful Spring-time,  
Talked of their friends at home, and the May  
Flower that sailed on the morrow.

“ I have been thinking all day,” said gently the  
Puritan maiden,

“ Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the  
hedge-rows of England,—

They are in blossom now, and the country is all like  
a garden ;

Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the  
lark and the linnet,



Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of  
neighbors  
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip  
together,  
And, at the end of the street, the village church,  
with the ivy  
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves  
in the churchyard.  
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my  
religion ;  
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in  
Old England.  
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it : I  
almost  
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely  
and wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth :—" Indeed I do  
not condemn you ;

Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this  
terrible winter.

Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger  
to lean on ;

So I have come to you now, with an offer and  
proffer of marriage

Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the  
Captain of Plymouth !”

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous  
writer of letters,—

Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beau-  
tiful phrases,

But came straight to the point, and blurted it out  
like a schoolboy ;

Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it  
more bluntly.

Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the  
Puritan maiden

Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with  
wonder,

Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and  
rendered her speechless ;

Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the  
ominous silence :

“If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very  
eager to wed me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the  
trouble to woo me ?

If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not  
worth the winning !”

Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing  
the matter,

Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain  
was busy,—

Had no time for such things ;—such things ! the  
words grating harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla ; and swift as a flash she  
made answer :

“ Has he no time for such things, as you call it,  
before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the  
wedding ?

That is the way with you men ; you don't under-  
stand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after thinking  
of this one and that one,

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with  
another,

Then you make known your desire, with abrupt  
and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps,  
that a woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never  
suspected,

Does not attain at a bound the height to which you  
have been climbing.

This is not right nor just: for surely a woman's  
affection

Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the  
asking.

When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but  
shows it.

Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that  
he loved me,

Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last  
might have won me,

Old \*and rough as he is; but now it never can  
happen.”

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words  
of Priscilla,

Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuad-  
ing, expanding;

Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his  
battles in Flanders,  
How with the people of God he had chosen to  
suffer affliction,  
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him  
Captain of Plymouth ;  
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree  
plainly  
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England,  
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of  
Thurston de Standish ;  
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,  
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a  
cock argent  
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the  
blazon.

He was a man of honor, of noble and generous  
nature ;

Though he was rough, he was kindly ; she knew  
how during the winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as  
woman's ;

Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and  
headstrong,

Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and  
placable always,

Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he  
was little of stature ;

For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly,  
courageous ;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in  
England,

Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of  
Miles Standish !

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and  
eloquent language,  
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his  
rival,  
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrun-  
ning with laughter,  
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak  
for yourself, John?"



## IV.

JOHN ALDEN.

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,  
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by  
the sea-side ;  
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head  
to the east-wind,  
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever  
within him.  
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptic  
splendors,

Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the  
Apostle,  
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and  
sapphire,  
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets up-  
lifted  
Glimmered the golden 'reed of the angel who mea-  
sured the city.

“Welcome, O wind of the East!” he exclaimed  
in his wild exultation,  
“Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of  
the misty Atlantic !  
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless mea-  
dows of sea-grass,  
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos and  
gardens of ocean !  
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead,  
and wrap me

Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever  
within me ! ”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moan-  
ing and tossing,  
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of  
the sea-shore.  
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of  
passions contending ;  
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship  
wounded and bleeding,  
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate plead-  
ings of duty !  
“ Is it my fault,” he said, “ that the maiden has  
chosen between us ?  
Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I am  
the victor ? ”  
Then within him there thundered a voice, like the  
voice of the Prophet :

“It hath displeased the Lord!”—and he thought  
of David’s transgression,

Bathsheba’s beautiful face, and his friend in the  
front of the battle!

Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and  
self-condemnation,

Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the  
deepest contrition:

“It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temp-  
tation of Satan!”

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea,  
and beheld there

Dimly the shadowy form of the May Flower riding  
at anchor,

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the  
morrow;

Heard the voices of men through the mist, the  
rattle of cordage

Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and  
the sailors' "Ay, ay, Sir!"

Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air  
of the twilight.

Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared  
at the vessel,

Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a  
phantom,

Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the  
beckoning shadow.

"Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured; "the  
hand of the Lord is

Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bond-  
age of error,

Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its  
waters around me,

Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts  
that pursue me.

Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will  
abandon,

Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart  
has offended,

Better to be in my grave in the green old church-  
yard in England,

Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of  
my kindred ;

Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame  
and dishonor !

Sacred and safe, and unseen, in the dark of the  
narrow chamber

With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that  
glimmers

Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of  
silence and darkness,—

Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal  
hereafter ! ”

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of  
his strong resolution,  
Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in  
the twilight,  
Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent  
and sombre,  
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of  
Plymouth,  
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the  
evening.  
Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubt-  
able Captain  
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of  
Cæsar,  
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Bra-  
bant or Flanders.  
“Long have you been on your errand,” he said,  
with a cheery demeanor,

Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears  
not the issue.

“Not far off is the house, although the woods are  
between us ;

But you have lingered so long, that while you were  
going and coming

I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished  
a city.

Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that  
has happened.”

Then John Alden spake, and related the won-  
drous adventure,

From beginning to end, minutely, just as it hap-  
pened ;

How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in  
his courtship,

Only smoothing a little, and softening down her  
refusal.



But when he came at length to the words Priscilla  
had spoken,

Words so tender and cruel : “ Why don’t you speak  
for yourself, John ? ”

Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped  
on the floor, till his armor

Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound  
of sinister omen.

All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden ex-  
plosion,

Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction  
around it.

Wildly he shouted, and loud : “ John Alden ! you  
have betrayed me !

Me, Miles Standish, your friend ! have supplanted,  
defrauded, betrayed me !

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the  
heart of Wat Tyler ;

Who shall prevent me from running my own  
through the heart of a traitor?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason  
to friendship!

You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished  
and loved as a brother;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my  
cup, to whose keeping

I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the most  
sacred and secret,—

You too, Brutus! ah, woe to the name of friend-  
ship hereafter!

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine, but  
henceforward

Let there be nothing between us save war, and im-  
placable hatred!"

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode  
about in the chamber,

Chafing and choking with rage ; like cords were  
the veins on his temples.

But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at  
the doorway,

Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent  
importance,

Rumors of danger and war, and hostile incur-  
sions of Indians !

Straightway the Captain paused, and, without fur-  
ther question or parley,

Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its  
scabbard of iron,

Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning  
fiercely, departed.

Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the  
scabbard

Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the  
distance.

Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into  
the darkness,  
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot  
with the insult,  
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his  
hands as in childhood,  
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who  
seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful  
away to the council,  
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his  
coming ;  
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in  
deportment,  
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to  
heaven,  
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of  
Plymouth.

God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat  
for this planting,

Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a  
nation ;

So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of  
the people !

Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude  
stern and defiant,

Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious  
in aspect ;

While on the table before them was lying unopened  
a Bible,

Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed  
in Holland,

And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake  
glittered,

Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal and  
challenge of warfare,

Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy  
tongues of defiance.

This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and  
heard them debating

What were an answer befitting the hostile message  
and menace,

Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting,  
objecting ;

One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the  
Elder,

Judging it wise and well that some at least were  
converted,

Rather than any were slain, for this was but  
Christian behavior !

Then outspoke Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain  
of Plymouth,

Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was  
husky with anger,

“What! do you mean to make war with milk and  
the water of roses?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer  
planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot  
red devils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a  
savage

Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the  
mouth of the cannon!”

Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder of  
Plymouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent  
language:

“Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other  
Apostles;

Not from the cannon’s mouth were the tongues of  
fire they spake with!”

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain,  
Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued  
discoursing :

“Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it  
pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that is  
righteous,

Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I answer  
the challenge !”

Then from the rattlesnake’s skin, with a sudden,  
contemptuous gesture,

Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder  
and bullets

Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the  
savage,

Saying, in thundering tones : “ Here, take it ! this  
is your answer !”



Silently out of the room then glided the glistening  
savage,  
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself  
like a serpent,  
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths  
of the forest.

## V.

## THE SAILING OF THE MAY FLOWER.

Just in the gray of the dawn, as the mists uprose  
from the meadows,

There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering  
village of Plymouth ;

Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative, " Forward ! "

Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then  
silence.

Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the  
village.

Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his  
valorous army,  
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of  
the white men,  
Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of  
the savage.  
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men  
of King David ;  
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and  
the Bible,—  
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and  
Philistines.  
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of  
morning ;  
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows,  
advancing,  
Fired along the line, and in regular order re-  
treated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length  
the village of Plymouth  
Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labors.  
Sweet was the air and soft ; and slowly the smoke  
from the chimneys  
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily  
eastward ;  
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and  
talked of the weather,  
Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing  
fair for the May Flower ;  
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the  
dangers that menaced,  
He]being gone, the town, and what should be done  
in his absence.  
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of  
women

Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the  
household.

Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced  
at his coming ;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the  
mountains ;

Beautiful on the sails of the May Flower riding at  
anchor,

Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms  
of the winter.

Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping  
her canvas,

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands  
of the sailors.

Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the  
ocean,

Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ; anon  
rang

Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the  
                  echoes

Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of  
                  departure !

Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of  
                  the people !

Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read  
                  from the Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent  
                  entreaty !

Then from their houses in haste came forth the  
                  Pilgrims of Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying down  
                  to the sea-shore,

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the May  
                  Flower,

Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them  
                  here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he  
had lain without slumber,  
Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest  
of his fever.  
He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late  
from the council,  
Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and  
murmur,  
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it  
sounded like swearing.  
Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a  
moment in silence ;  
Then he had turned away, and said : “ I will not  
awake him ;  
Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the use of  
more talking ! ”  
Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself  
down on his pallet,

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break  
of the morning,—

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his  
campaigns in Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for  
action.

But with the dawn he arose ; in the twilight Alden  
beheld him

Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of his  
armor,

Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Da-  
mascus,

Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out  
of the chamber.

Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned  
to embrace him,

Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for  
pardon ;



All the old friendship came back, with its tender  
and grateful emotions ;

But his pride overmastered the nobler nature within  
him,—

Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning  
fire of the insult.

So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but  
spake not,

Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and  
he spake not !

Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the  
people were saying,

Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and  
Richard and Gilbert,

Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of  
Scripture,

And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down  
to the sea-shore,

Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their  
feet as a door-step  
Into a world unknown, — the corner-stone of a  
nation !

There with his boat was the Master, already a  
little impatient  
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might  
shift to the eastward,  
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor of  
ocean about him,  
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming  
letters and parcels  
Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled  
together  
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly  
bewildered.  
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed  
on the gunwale,

One still firm on the rock, and talking at times  
with the sailors,

Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for  
starting.

He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his  
anguish,

Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel  
is or canvas,

Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would  
rise and pursue him.

But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form  
of Priscilla

Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all  
that was passing.

Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his  
intention,

Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring,  
and patient,

That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled  
from its purpose,

As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is  
destruction.

Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mys-  
terious instincts !

Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are  
moments,

Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the  
wall adamantine !

“ Here I remain ! ” he exclaimed, as he looked at  
the heavens above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the  
mist and the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering  
headlong.

“ Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether  
above me

Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning  
 over the ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral and  
 ghost-like,

Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine  
 for protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the  
 ether!

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt  
 me; I heed not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen of  
 evil!

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so  
 wholesome,

As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is  
 pressed by her footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible  
 presence

Hover around her for ever, protecting, supporting  
her weakness ;

Yes ! as my foot was the first that stepped on this  
rock at the landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at  
the leaving !”

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified  
air and important,

Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind  
and the weather,

Walked about on the sands ; and the people crowded  
around him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful  
remembrance.

Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasp-  
ing a tiller,

Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to  
his vessel,

Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and  
flurry,

Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness  
and sorrow,

Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing  
but Gospel!

Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell  
of the Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true! not one went back in the  
May Flower!

No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to  
this ploughing!

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs  
of the sailors

Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous anchor.

Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the  
west-wind,

Blowing steady and strong; and the May Flower  
sailed from the harbor,  
Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to  
the southward  
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First  
Encounter,  
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the  
open Atlantic,  
Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts  
of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of  
the vessel,  
Much endeared to them all, as something living and  
human;  
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a  
vision prophetic,  
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Ply-  
mouth



Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and thanked  
the Lord and took courage.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the  
rock, and above them

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death,  
and their kindred

Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the  
prayer that they uttered.

Sun-illumined, and white on the eastern verge of  
the ocean

Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a  
graveyard;

Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of escaping.

Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of  
an Indian,

Watching them from the hill; but while they spake  
with each other,

Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying,  
"Look!" he had vanished.

So they returned to their homes ; but Alden lingered  
a little,  
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash  
of the billows  
Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and  
flash of the sunshine,  
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the  
waters.

## VI.

## PRISCILLA.

THUS for a while he stood, and mused by the shore  
of the ocean,  
Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla ;  
And as if thought had the power to draw to itself,  
like the loadstone,  
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its nature,  
Lo ! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing  
beside him.

“Are you so much offended, you will not speak  
to me?” said she.

“Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you  
were pleading

Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive  
and wayward,

Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps  
of decorum?

Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so  
frankly, for saying

What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never  
unsay it;

For there are moments in life, when the heart is so  
full of emotion,

That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths  
like a pebble

Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its  
secret,

Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered  
together.

Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak  
of Miles Standish,

Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects  
into virtues,

Praising his courage and strength, and even his  
fighting in Flanders,

As if by fighting alone you could win the heart  
of a woman,

Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting  
your hero.

Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible im-  
pulse.

You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the  
friendship between us,

Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily  
broken !”

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the  
friend of Miles Standish :

“ I was not angry with you, with myself alone I was  
angry,                    ‘

Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in  
my keeping.”

“ No !” interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt  
and decisive ;

“ No : you were angry with me, for speaking so  
frankly and freely.

It was wrong, I acknowledge ; for it is the fate of a  
woman

Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost  
that is speechless,

Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its  
silence.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering  
women

Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean  
rivers

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, un-  
seen, and unfruitful,

Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and  
profitless murmurs."

Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man,  
the lover of women :

" Heaven forbid it, Priscilla ; and truly they seem  
to me always

More like the beautiful rivers that watered the  
garden of Eden,

More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of  
Havilah flowing,

Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet  
of the garden !"

" Ah, by these words, I can see," again interrupted  
the maiden,

“ How very little you prize me, or care for what  
I am saying.

When from the depths of my heart, in pain and  
with secret misgiving,

Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only  
and kindness,

Straightway you take up my words, that are plain  
and direct and in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and answer  
with flattering phrases.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best  
that is in you ;

For I know and esteem you, and feel that your  
nature is noble,

Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal  
level.

Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it per-  
haps the more keenly



If you say aught that implies I am only as one  
among many,

If you make use of those common and compli-  
mentary phrases

Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking  
with women,

But which women reject as insipid, if not as in-  
sulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden; and listened and  
looked at Priscilla,

Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more  
divine in her beauty.

He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause  
of another,

Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in  
vain for an answer.

So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined

What was at work in his heart, that made him so  
awkward and speechless.

“Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we  
think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred pro-  
fessions of friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to  
declare it :

I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak  
with you always.

So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted  
to hear you

Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the  
Captain Miles Standish.

For I must tell you the truth : much more to me is  
your friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice the  
hero you think him.”

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who  
eagerly grasped it,  
Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching  
and bleeding so sorely,  
Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said,  
with a voice full of feeling:  
“Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who  
offer you friendship  
Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and  
dearest!”

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of  
the May Flower,  
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the  
horizon,  
Homeward together they walked, with a strange  
indefinite feeling,  
That all the rest had departed and left them alone  
in the desert.

But, as they went through the fields in the blessing  
and smile of the sunshine,  
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very  
archly :

“ Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit  
of the Indians,

Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a household,

You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened between you,

When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you found me.”

Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole of the story,—

Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles Standish.

Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between laughing and earnest,

“He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment !”

But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how much he had suffered,—

How he had even determined to sail that day in the May Flower,

And had remained for her sake on hearing the dangers that threatened,—

All her manner was changed, and she said with a faltering accent,

“Truly I thank you for this : how good you have been to me always !”

Thus as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys,

Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly backward,

Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of contrition ;

Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,  
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of  
his longings,  
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by  
remorseful misgivings.

## VII.

## THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH.

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was  
marching steadily northward,  
Winding through forest and swamp, and along the  
trend of the sea-shore,  
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his  
anger  
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous  
odor of powder  
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the  
scents of the forest.

Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved  
his discomfort ;

He who was used to success, and to easy victories  
always,

Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn  
by a maiden,

Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend  
whom most he had trusted !

Ah ! 't was too much to be borne, and he fretted  
and chafed in his armor !

“ I alone am to blame,” he muttered, “ for mine  
was the folly.

What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray  
in the harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the  
wooing of maidens ?

'T was but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like  
so many others !



What I thought was a flower is only a weed, and  
is worthless ;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away,  
and henceforward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of  
dangers !”

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and  
discomfort,

While he was marching by day or lying at night in  
the forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations be-  
yond them.

After a three days’ march he came to an Indian  
encampment

Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea  
and the forest ;

Women at work by the tents, and the warriors,  
horrid with war-paint,

Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together ;

Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach  
of the white men,

Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre  
and musket,

Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from  
among them advancing,

Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs  
as a present ;

Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts  
there was hatred.

Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers gigantic  
in stature,

Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king  
of Bashan ;

One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called  
Wattawamat.

Round their necks were suspended their knives in  
scabbards of wampum,

Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp  
as a needle.

Other arms had they none, for they were cunning  
and crafty.

“Welcome, English!” they said, — these words  
they had learned from the traders

Touching at times on the coast, to barter and  
chaffer for peltries.

Then in their native tongue they began to parley  
with Standish,

Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend  
of the white man,

Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for  
muskets and powder,

Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with  
the plague in his cellars,

Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the  
red man !

But when Standish refused, and said he would give  
them the Bible,

Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast  
and to bluster.

Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front  
of the other,

And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly spake  
to the Captain :

“ Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of  
the Captain,

Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of the brave  
Wattawamat

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a  
woman,

But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree riven  
by lightning,

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons  
about him,

Shouting, 'Who is there here to fight with the  
brave Wattawamat?'"

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the  
blade on his left hand,

Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the  
handle,

Saying, with bitter expression, and look of sinister  
meaning:

"I have another at home, with the face of a man on  
the handle;

By and by they shall marry; and there will be  
plenty of children!"

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insult-  
ing Miles Standish:

While with his fingers he patted the knife that  
hung at his bosom,

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it  
back, as he muttered,

“ By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah, ha ! but  
shall speak not !

This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent  
to destroy us !

He is a little man ; let him go and work with the  
women ! ”

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and  
figures of Indians

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in  
the forest,

Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their  
bow-strings,

Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of  
their ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and  
treated them smoothly ;

So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days  
of the fathers.

But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the  
taunt, and the insult,

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of  
Thurston de Standish,

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the  
veins of his temples.

Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and, snatching  
his knife from its scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward,  
the savage

Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierce-  
ness upon it.

Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound  
of the war-whoop,

And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of  
December,

Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery  
arrows.

Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud  
came the lightning,

Out of the lightning thunder; and death unseen  
ran before it.

Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp  
and in thicket,

Hotly pursued and beset; but their sachem, the  
brave Wattawamat,

Fled not; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had  
a bullet

Passed through his brain, and he fell with both  
hands clutching the greensward,

Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the  
land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors  
lay, and above them,



Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of  
the white man.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of Plymouth:

“Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his  
strength, and his stature,—

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little  
man; but I see now

Big enough have you been to lay him speechless  
before you!”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the  
stalwart Miles Standish.

When the tidings thereof were brought to the  
village of Plymouth,

And as a trophy of war the head of the brave  
Wattawamat

Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once  
was a church and a fortress,

All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord,  
and took courage.

Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of  
terror,

Thanking God in her heart that she had not mar-  
ried Miles Standish ;

Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from  
his battles,

He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and  
reward of his valor.

## VIII.

## THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

MONTH after month passed away, and in Autumn  
the ships of the merchants  
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and  
corn for the Pilgrims.  
All in the village was peace; the men were intent  
on their labors,  
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot  
and with merestead,  
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the  
grass in the meadows,

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer  
in the forest.

All in the village was peace ; but at times the rumor  
of warfare

Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of  
danger.

Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scouring  
the land with his forces,

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien  
armies,

Till his name had become a sound of fear to the  
nations.

Anger was still in his heart, but at times the re-  
morse and contrition

Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate  
outbreak,

Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of  
a river,

Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and  
brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new  
habitation,  
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the  
firs of the forest.

Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was  
covered with rushes ;

Latticeed the windows were, and the window-panes  
were of paper,

Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were  
excluded.

There too he dug a well, and around it planted an  
orchard :

Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well  
and the orchard.

Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and  
secure from annoyance,

Raghorn, the snow-white steer, that had fallen to  
Alden's allotment

In the division of cattle, might ruminate in the  
night-time

Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by  
sweet pennyroyal.

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager feet  
would the dreamer

Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to  
the house of Priscilla,

Led by illusions romantic and subtile deceptions of  
fancy,

Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the sem-  
blance of friendship.

Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the  
walls of his dwelling ;

Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil  
of his garden ;

Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible

on Sunday

Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described

in the Proverbs,—

How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in

her always,

How all the days of her life she will do him good,

and not evil,

How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh

with gladness,

How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth

the distaff,

How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her

household,

Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet

cloth of her weaving!

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the

Autumn,

Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous fingers,

As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and his fortune,

After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the spindle.

“Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “when I see you spinning and spinning,

Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others,

Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a moment ;

You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful Spinner.”

Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter ; the spindle

Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in her fingers ;



While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mis-  
chief, continued :

“ You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the  
queen of Helvetia ;

She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of  
Southampton,

Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o’er valley and  
meadow and mountain,

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to  
her saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed  
into a proverb.

So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-  
wheel shall no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its cham-  
bers with music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it  
was in their childhood,

Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the spinner !”

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,

Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise was the sweetest,

Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spinning,

Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases of Alden :

“ Come, you must not be idle ; if I am a pattern for housewives,

Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands.

Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting ;

Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed and the manners,

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times  
of John Alden !”

Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his  
hands she adjusted,

He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended  
before him,

She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread  
from his fingers,

Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of  
holding,

Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled  
expertly

Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how could  
she help it?—

Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his  
body.

Lo ! in the midst of this scene, a breathless  
messenger entered,

Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from  
the village.

Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian had  
brought them the tidings,—

Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front  
of the battle,

Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of  
his forces;

All the town would be burned, and all the people  
be murdered!

Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the  
hearts of the hearers.

Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face look-  
ing backward

Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in  
horror;

But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the  
arrow

Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own,  
and had sundered

Once and for ever the bonds that held him bound  
as a captive,

Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of  
his freedom,

Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what  
he was doing,

Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form  
of Priscilla,

Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his own,  
and exclaiming :

“ Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man  
put them asunder ! ”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate  
sources,

Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks,  
and pursuing

Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and  
nearer,

Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the  
forest ;

So these lives that had run thus far in separate  
channels,

Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and  
flowing asunder,

Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and  
nearer,

Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the  
other.

## IX.

## THE WEDDING-DAY.

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of  
purple and scarlet,  
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his gar-  
ments resplendent,  
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his  
forehead,  
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and  
pomegranates.  
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapor  
beneath him  
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his  
feet was a laver!

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan maiden.

Friends were assembled together; the Elder and Magistrate also

Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the Law and the Gospel,

One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing of heaven.

Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of Ruth and of Boaz.

Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of betrothal,

Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's presence,

After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.

Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of Plymouth



Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were  
founded that day in affection,  
Speaking of life and of death, and imploring divine  
benedictions.

Lo ! when the service was ended, a form appeared  
on the threshold,  
Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrowful  
figure !  
Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the  
strange apparition ?  
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on  
his shoulder ?  
Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral illusion ?  
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid  
the betrothal ?  
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited,  
unwelcomed ;

Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an  
expression

Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart  
hidden beneath them,

As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain-  
cloud

Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by  
its brightness.

Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips, but  
was silent,

As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention.

But when were ended the troth and the prayer and  
the last benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with  
amazement

Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish the Cap-  
tain of Plymouth !

Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emo-  
tion, " Forgive me !

I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I cherished the feeling ;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God !  
it is ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins  
of Hugh Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for  
error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend  
of John Alden.”

Thereupon answered the bridegroom : “ Let all be  
forgotten between us,—

All save the dear, old friendship, and that shall grow  
older and dearer !”

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted  
Priscilla,

Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned  
gentry in England,

Something of camp and of court, of town and of  
country, commingled,

Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding  
her husband.

Then he said with a smile: "I should have remem-  
bered the adage,—

If you would be well served, you must serve your-  
self; and moreover,

No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season  
of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and greater  
yet their rejoicing,

Thus to behold once more the sun-burnt face of  
their Captain,

Whom they had mourned as dead; and they ga-  
thered and crowded about him,

Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride  
and of bridegroom,

Questioning, answering, laughing, and each inter-  
 rupting the other,  
 Till the good Captain declared, being quite over-  
 powered and bewildered,  
 He had rather by far break into an Indian encamp-  
 ment,  
 Than come again to a wedding to which he had not  
 been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood  
 with the bride at the doorway,  
 Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beau-  
 tiful morning.  
 Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in  
 the sunshine,  
 Lay extended before them the land of toil and pri-  
 vation ;  
 There were the graves of the dead, and the barren  
 waste of the sea-shore

There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the  
meadows ;

But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the  
Garden of Eden,

Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was  
the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and  
stir of departure,

Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient  
of longer delaying,

Each with his plan for the day, and the work that  
was left uncompleted.

Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations  
of wonder,

Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so  
proud of Priscilla,

Brought out his snow-white steer, obeying the hand  
of its master,

Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its  
nostrils,

Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed  
for a saddle.

She should not walk, he said, through the dust and  
heat of the noonday ;

Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along  
like a peasant.

Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the  
others,

Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the  
hand of her husband,

Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her  
palfrey.

“ Nothing is wanting now,” he said with a smile,  
“ but the distaff ;

Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful  
Bertha !”

Onward the bridal proeession now moved to their  
new habitation,  
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing  
together.  
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the  
ford in the forest,  
Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of  
love through its bosom,  
Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the  
azure abysses.  
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pour-  
ing his splendors,  
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches  
above them suspended,  
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the  
pine and the fir-tree,  
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the  
valley of Eshcol.



Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral  
ages,

Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling  
Rebecca and Isaac,

Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful  
always,

Love immortal and young in the endless succession  
of lovers.

So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the  
bridal procession.



## BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

. . . come i gru van cantando lor lai,  
Facendo in aer di sè lunga riga.

DANTE.



## PROMETHEUS,

OR THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

---

OF Prometheus, how undaunted  
On Olympus' shining bastions  
His audacious foot he planted,  
Myths are told and songs are chaunted,  
Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition  
Of that flight through heavenly portals,  
The old classic superstition  
Of the theft and the transmission  
Of the fire of the Immortals !

First the deed of noble daring,  
Born of heavenward aspiration,  
Then the fire with mortals sharing,  
Then the vulture,—the despairing  
Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

All is but a symbol painted  
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer ;  
Only those are crowned and sainted  
Who with grief have been acquainted,  
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,  
In their triumph and their yearning,  
In their passionate pulsations,  
In their words among the nations,  
The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,  
All this toil for human culture ?  
Through the cloud-raek, dark and trailing,  
Must they see above them sailing  
O'er life's barren crags the vulture ?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,  
By defeat and exile maddened ;  
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,  
Nature's priests and Corybantes,  
By affliction touched and saddened.

But the glories so transcendent  
That around their memories cluster,  
And, on all their steps attendant,  
Make their darkened lives resplendent  
With such gleams of inward lustre !

All the melodies mysterious,  
Through the dreary darkness chaunted ;  
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,  
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,  
Words that whispered, songs that haunted !

All the soul in rapt suspension,  
All the quivering, palpitating  
Chords of life in utmost tension,  
With the fervor of invention,  
With the rapture of creating !

Ah, Prometheus ! heaven-scaling !  
In such hours of exultation  
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,  
Might behold the vulture sailing  
Round the cloudy crags Caucasian !



Though to all there is not given  
Strength for such sublime endeavor,  
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,  
And to leaven with fiery leaven  
All the hearts of men for ever ;

Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted  
Honor and believe the presage,  
Hold aloft their torches lighted,  
Gleaming through the realms benighted,  
As they onward bear the message !

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

---

SAINT AUGUSTINE ! well hast thou said,  
That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder, if we will but tread  
Beneath our feet each deed of shame !

All common things, each day's events,  
That with the hour begin and end,  
Our pleasures and our discontents,  
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,  
That makes another's virtues less ;  
The revel of the ruddy wine,  
And all occasions of excess ;

The longing for ignoble things ;  
The strife for triumph more than truth ;  
The hardening of the heart, that brings  
Irreverence for the dreams of youth ;

All thoughts of ill ; all evil deeds,  
That have their root in thoughts of ill ;  
Whatever hinders or impedes  
The action of the nobler will ;—

All these must first be trampled down  
Beneath our feet, if we would gain  
In the bright fields of fair renown  
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar ;  
But we have feet to scale and climb  
By slow degrees, by more and more,  
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone  
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,  
When nearer seen, and better known,  
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear  
Their solid bastions to the skies,  
Are crossed by pathways, that appear  
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore  
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,  
We may discern—unseen before—  
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past,  
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,  
If, rising on its wrecks, at last  
To something nobler we attain.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

---

IN Mather's Magnalia Christi,  
Of the old colonial time,  
May be found in prose the legend  
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,  
And the keen and frosty airs,  
That filled her sails at parting,  
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

"O Lord! if it be thy pleasure"—  
Thus prayed the old divine—  
"To bury our friends in the ocean,  
Take them, for they are thine!"

But Master Lamberton muttered,  
And under his breath said he,  
“This ship is so crank and walty  
I fear our grave she will be !”

And the ships that came from England,  
When the winter months were gone,  
Brought no tidings of this vessel  
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying  
That the Lord would let them hear  
What in his greater wisdom  
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered :—  
It was in the month of June,  
An hour before the sunset  
Of a windy afternoon,

When, steadily steering landward,  
A ship was seen below,  
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,  
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,  
Right against the wind that blew,  
Until the eye could distinguish  
The faces of the crew.

Then fell her straining topmasts,  
Hanging tangled in the shrouds,  
And her sails were loosened and lifted,  
And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,  
Fell slowly, one by one,  
And the hulk dilated and vanished,  
As a sea-mist in the sun !



And the people who saw this marvel  
Each said unto his friend,  
That this was the mould of their vessel,  
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village  
Gave thanks to God in prayer,  
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,  
He had sent this Ship of Air.

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS.

---

A MIST was driving down the British Channel,  
The day was just begun,  
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,  
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,  
And the white sails of ships ;  
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon  
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover  
Were all alert that day,  
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,  
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,  
 Their cannon, through the night,  
 Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,  
 The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations  
 On every citadel ;  
 Each answering each, with morning salutations,  
 That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,  
 Replied the distant forts,  
 As if to summon from his sleep the Warden  
 And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,  
 No drum-beat from the wall,  
 No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,  
 Awaken with its call !

No more, surveying with an eye impartial  
The long line of the coast,  
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field Marshal  
Be seen upon his post !

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,  
In sombre harness mailed,  
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,  
The rampart wall has scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,  
The dark and silent room,  
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,  
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,  
But smote the Warden hoar ;  
Ah ! what a blow ! that made all England tremble  
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,  
The sun rose bright o'erhead ;  
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated  
That a great man was dead.

## HAUNTED HOUSES.

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died  
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors  
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,  
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the door-way, on the stair,  
Along the passages they come and go,  
Impalpable impressions on the air,  
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table, than the hosts  
Invited ; the illuminated hall  
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,  
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see

The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear ;

He but perceives what is ; while unto me

All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands ;

Owners and occupants of earlier dates

From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,

And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit-world around this world of sense

Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere

Wafts through these earthly mists and vapors  
dense

A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise

By opposite attractions and desires ;

The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,

And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar  
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,  
Come from the influence of an unseen star,  
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud  
Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,  
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd  
Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends  
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,  
O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,  
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.



IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE.

---

IN the village churchyard she lies,  
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,  
No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs ;  
At her feet and at her head  
Lies a slave to attend the dead,  
But their dust is white as hers.

Was she a lady of high degree,  
So much in love with the vanity  
And foolish pomp of this world of ours ?  
Or was it Christian charity,  
And lowliness and humility,  
The richest and rarest of all dowers ?

Who shall tell us ? No one speaks ;  
No color shoots into those cheeks,  
    Either of anger or of pride,  
At the rude question we have asked ;  
Nor will the mystery be unmasked  
    By those who are sleeping at her side.

Hereafter ?—And do you think to look  
On the terrible pages of that Book  
    To find her failings, faults, and errors ?  
Ah, you will then have other cares,  
In your own short-comings and despairs,  
    In your own secret sins and terrors !

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S-NEST.

---

ONCE the Emperor Charles of Spain,  
With his swarthy, grave commanders,  
I forget in what campaign,  
Long besieged, in mud and rain,  
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,  
In great boots of Spanish leather,  
Striding with a measured tramp,  
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,  
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,  
Over upland and through hollow,  
Giving their impatience vent,  
Perched upon the Emperor's tent,  
In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,  
Built of clay and hair of horses,  
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,  
Found on hedge-rows east and west,  
After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,  
As he twirled his gray mustachio,  
"Sure this swallow overhead  
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,  
And the Emperor but a Macho!"

Hearing his imperial name

Coupled with those words of malice,  
Half in anger, half in shame,  
Forth the great campaigner came  
Slowly from his canvas palace.

“Let no hand the bird molest,”

Said he solemnly, “nor hurt her !”  
Adding then, by way of jest,  
“Golondrina is my guest,  
'Tis the wife of some deserter !”

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,

Through the camp was spread the rumor,  
And the soldiers, as they quaffed  
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed  
At the Emperor's pleasant humor.

So unharmed and unafraid  
Sat the swallow still and brooded,  
Till the constant cannonade  
Through the walls a breach had made,  
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,  
Struck its tents as if disbanding,  
Only not the Emperor's tent,  
For he ordered, ere he went,  
Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,  
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,  
Till the brood was fledged and flown,  
Singing o'er those walls of stone  
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

THE TWO ANGELS.

---

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,  
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke ;  
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,  
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of  
smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,  
Alike their features and their robes of white ;  
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,  
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way ;  
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,  
“ Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray  
The place where thy beloved are at rest ! ”

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,  
Descending, at my door began to knock,  
And my soul sank within me, as in wells  
The waters sink before an earthquake’s shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,  
The terror and the tremor and the pain,  
That oft before had filled or haunted me,  
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,  
And listened, for I thought I heard God’s voice ;  
And, knowing whatsoe’er He sent was best,  
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.



Then with a smile, that filled the house with light,  
    “ My errand is not Death, but Life,” he said  
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,  
    On his celestial embassy he sped.

’T was at thy door, O friend ! and not at mine,  
    The angel with the amaranthine wreath,  
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,  
    Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,  
    A shadow on those features fair and thin ;  
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,  
    Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God ! If He but wave his hand,  
    The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,  
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
    Lo ! He looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his ;

Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er ;

Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,

Against his messengers to shut the door ?

DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT.

---

In broad daylight, and at noon,  
Yesterday I saw the moon  
Sailing high, but faint and white,  
As a school-boy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,  
I read a Poet's mystic lay ;  
And it seemed to me at most  
As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day  
Like a passion died away,  
And the night, serene and still,  
Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon in all her pride,  
Like a spirit glorified,  
Filled and overflowed the night  
With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again  
Passed like music through my brain ;  
Night interpreted to me  
All its grace and mystery.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

---

How strange it seems ! These Hebrews in their  
    graves,

Close by the street of this fair seaport town,  
Silent beside the never-silent waves,  
At rest in all this moving up and down !

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep  
Wave their broad curtains in the south-wind's  
    breath,

While underneath such leafy tents they keep  
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,  
 That pave with level flags their burial-place,  
 Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down  
 And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,  
 Of foreign accent, and of different climes ;  
 Alvares and Rivera interchange  
 With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

“ Blessed be God ! for He created Death ! ”

The mourners said, “ and Death is rest and  
 peace ; ”

Then added, in the certainty of faith,

“ And giveth Life that never more shall cease. ”

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,  
 No Psalms of David now the silence break,  
 No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue  
 In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,  
 And not neglected ; for a hand unseen,  
 Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,  
 Still keeps their graves and their remembrance  
 green.

How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,  
 What persecution, merciless and blind,  
 Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—  
 These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,  
 Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire ;  
 Taught in the school of patience to endure  
 The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread  
 And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,  
 The wasting famine of the heart they fed,  
 And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha ! was the cry

That rang from town to town, from street to  
street ;

At every gate the accursed Mordecai

Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Chris-  
tian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand

Walked with them through the world where'er  
they went ;

Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,

And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast

Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,

And all the great traditions of the Past

They saw reflected in the coming time.



And thus for ever with reverted look

The mystic volume of the world they read,  
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,  
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah ! what once has been shall be no more !

The groaning earth in travail and in pain  
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,  
And the dead nations never rise again.

## OLIVER BASSELIN.

---

IN the Valley of the Vire  
Still is seen an ancient mill,  
With its gables quaint and queer,  
And beneath the window sill,  
On the stone,  
These words alone :  
“ Oliver Basselin lived here.”

Far above it, on the steep,  
Ruined stands the old Château ;  
Nothing but the donjon-keep  
Left for shelter or for show.

Its vacant eyes  
Stare at the skies,  
Stare at the valley green and deep.

Once a convent, old and brown,  
Looked, but ah ! it looks no more,  
From the neighboring hillside down  
On the rushing and the roar  
Of the stream  
Whose sunny gleam  
Cheers the little Norman town.

In that darksome mill of stone,  
To the water's dash and din,  
Careless, humble, and unknown,  
Sang the poet Basselin  
Songs that fill  
That ancient mill  
With a splendor of its own.

Never feeling of unrest  
    Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed ;  
Only made to be his nest,  
    All the lovely valley seemed ;  
    No desire  
    Of soaring higher  
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine ;  
    Were not songs of that high art,  
Which, as winds do in the pine,  
    Find an answer in each heart ;  
    But the mirth  
    Of this green earth  
Laughed and revelled in his line.

From the alehouse and the inn,  
    Opening on the narrow street,

Came the loud, convivial din,  
Singing and applause of feet,  
The laughing lays  
That in those days  
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,  
Knights, who fought at Agincourt,  
Watched and waited, spur on heel;  
But the poet sang for sport  
Songs that rang  
Another clang,  
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in gray,  
Sat the monks in lonely cells,  
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,  
And the poet heard their bells;

But his rhymes  
Found other chimes,  
Nearer to the earth than they.

Gone are all the barons bold,  
Gone are all the knights and squires,  
Gone the abbot stern and cold,  
And the brotherhood of friars ;  
Not a name  
Remains to fame,  
From those mouldering days of old !

But the poet's memory here  
Of the landscape makes a part ;  
Like the river, swift and clear,  
Flows his song through many a heart ;  
Haunting still  
That ancient mill,  
In the Valley of the Vire.

VICTOR GALBRAITH.

---

UNDER the walls of Monterey  
At daybreak the bugles began to play,  
Victor Galbraith !  
In the mist of the morning damp and gray,  
These were the words they seemed to say :  
“ Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith ! ”

Forth he came, with a martial tread ;  
Firm was his step, erect his head ;  
Victor Galbraith,

He who so well the bugle played,  
Could not mistake the words it said :

“ Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith ! ”

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,  
He looked at the files of musketry,

Victor Galbraith !

And he said, with a steady voice and eye,  
“ Take good aim ; I am ready to die ! ”

Thus challenges death

Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,  
Six leaden balls on their errand sped ;

Victor Galbraith

Falls to the ground, but he is not dead ;

His name was not stamped on those balls of lead,

And they only scath

Victor Galbraith.



Three balls are in his breast and brain,

But he rises out of the dust again,

Victor Galbraith !

The water he drinks has a bloody stain ;

“ O kill me, and put me out of my pain ! ”

In his agony prayeth

Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,

And the bugler has died a death of shame,

Victor Galbraith !

His soul has gone back to whence it came,

And no one answers to the name,

When the Sergeant saith,

“ Victor Galbraith ! ”

Under the walls of Monterey

By night a bugle is heard to play,

Victor Galbraith !

Through the mist of the valley damp and gray  
The sentinels hear the sound, and say,

“ That is the wraith

Of Victor Galbraith !”

MY LOST YOUTH.

---

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town  
That is seated by the sea ;  
Often in thought go up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
And my youth comes back to me.  
And a verse of a Lapland song  
Is haunting my memory still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
And catch, in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams.

And the burden of that old song,  
It murmurs and whispers still :  
“A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free ;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still :  
“A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,

And the fort upon the hill ;

The sun-rise gun, with its hollow roar,

The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,

And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song

Throbs in my memory still :

“ A boy's will is the wind's will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the sea-fight far away,

How it thundered o'er the tide !

And the dead captains, as they lay

In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,

Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song

Goes through me with a thrill :

“ A boy's will is the wind's will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods ;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still :  
“ A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
Across the schoolboy's brain ;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song  
Sings on, and is never still :  
“ A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

There are things of which I may not speak ;

There are dreams that cannot die ;

There are thoughts that make the strong heart  
weak,

And bring a pallor into the cheek,

And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song

Come over me like a chill :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

Strange to me now are the forms I meet

When I visit the dear old town ;

But the native air is pure and sweet,

And the trees that o’ershadow each well-known  
street,

As they balance up and down,

Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

And Deering’s Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that were,  
I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still :  
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”



THE ROPEWALK.

---

IN that building, long and low,  
With its windows all a-row,  
Like the port-holes of a hulk,  
Human spiders spin and spin,  
Backward down their thread so thin  
Dropping, each a hempen bulk.

At the end, an open door ;  
Squares of sunshine on the floor  
Light the long and dusky lane ;

And the whirring of a wheel,  
Dull and drowsy, makes me feel  
All its spokes are in my brain.

As the spinners to the end  
Downward go and re-ascend,  
Gleam the long threads in the sun ;  
While within this brain of mine  
Cobwebs brighter and more fine  
By the busy wheel are spun.

Two fair maidens in a swing,  
Like white doves upon the wing,  
First before my vision pass ;  
Laughing, as their gentle hands  
Closely clasp the twisted strands,  
At their shadow on the grass.

Then a booth of mountebanks,  
With its smell of tan and planks,  
    And a girl poised high in air  
On a cord, in spangled dress,  
With a faded loveliness,  
    And a weary look of care.

Then a homestead among farms,  
And a woman with bare arms  
    Drawing water from a well ;  
As the bucket mounts apace,  
With it mounts her own fair face,  
    As at some magician's spell.

Then an old man in a tower,  
Ringing loud the noontide hour,  
    While the rope coils round and round

Like a serpent at his feet,  
And again, in swift retreat,  
Nearly lifts him from the ground.

Then within a prison-yard,  
Faces fixed, and stern, and hard,  
Laughter and indecent mirth ;  
Ah ! it is the gallows-tree !  
Breath of Christian charity,  
Blow, and sweep it from the earth !

Then a schoolboy, with his kite  
Gleaming in a sky of light,  
And an eager, upward look ;  
Steeds pursued through lane and field ;  
Fowlers with their snares concealed ;  
And an angler by a brook.

Ships rejoicing in the breeze,  
Wrecks that float o'er unknown seas,  
    Anchors dragged through faithless sand;  
Sea-fog drifting overhead,  
And, with lessening line and lead,  
    Sailors feeling for the land.

All these scenes do I behold,  
These, and many left untold,  
    In that building long and low;  
While the wheel goes round and round,  
With a drowsy dreamy sound,  
    And the spinners backward go.

THE GOLDEN MILESTONE.

---

LEAFLESS are the trees ; their purple branches  
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,  
Rising silent  
In the Red Sea of the Winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,  
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,  
Smoky columns  
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light ;  
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,  
Social watch-fires  
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,  
And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree

For its freedom

Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,  
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,

Asking sadly

Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,  
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,

Asking blindly

Of the Future what it cannot give them.

By the fireside tragedies are acted  
In whose scenes appear two actors only,

Wife and husband,

And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,  
Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,  
Waiting, watching  
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-stone ;  
Is the central point, from which he measures  
Every distance  
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it ;  
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,  
As he heard them  
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,  
Nor the march of the encroaching city,  
Drives an exile  
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead.



We may build more splendid habitations,  
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,  
But we cannot  
Buy with gold the old associations !

## CATAWBA WINE.

---

THIS song of mine  
Is a Song of the Vine,  
To be sung by the glowing embers  
Of wayside inns,  
When the rain begins  
To darken the drear Novembers.

It is not a song  
Of the Scuppernong,  
From warm Carolinian valleys,  
Nor the Isabel  
And the Muscadel  
That bask in our garden alleys.

Nor the red Mustang,  
Whose clusters hang  
O'er the waves of the Colorado,  
And the fiery flood  
Of whose purple blood  
Has a dash of Spanish bravado.

For richest and best  
Is the wine of the West,  
That grows by the Beautiful River ;  
Whose sweet perfume  
Fills all the room  
With a benison on the giver.

And as hollow trees  
Are the haunts of bees,  
For ever going and coming ;

.

So this crystal hive  
Is all alive  
With a swarming and buzzing and humming.

Very good in its way  
Is the Verzenay,  
Or the Sillery soft and creamy;  
But Catawba wine  
Has a taste more divine,  
More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.

There grows no vine  
By the haunted Rhine,  
By Danube or Guadalquivir,  
Nor on island or cape,  
That bears such a grape  
As grows by the Beautiful River.

Drugged is their juice  
For foreign use,  
When shipped o'er the reeling Atlantic,  
To rack our brains  
With the fever pains,  
That have driven the Old World frantic.

To the sewers and sinks  
With all such drinks,  
And after them tumble the mixer ;  
For a poison malign  
Is such Borgia wine,  
Or at best but a Devil's Elixir.

While pure as a spring  
Is the wine I sing,  
And to praise it, one needs but name it ;

For Catawba wine  
Has need of no sign,  
No tavern-bush to proclaim it.

And this Song of the Vine,  
This greeting of mine,  
The winds and the birds shall deliver  
To the Queen of the West,  
In her garlands dressed,  
On the banks of the Beautiful River.

SANTA FILOMENA.

---

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,  
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
Our hearts, in glad surprise,  
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls  
Into our inmost being rolls,  
And lifts us unawares  
Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds  
Thus help us in our daily needs,  
And by their overflow  
Raise us from what is low !

Thus thought I, as by night I read  
Of the great army of the dead,  
The trenches cold and damp,  
The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,  
In dreary hospitals of pain,  
The cheerless corridors,  
The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery  
A lady with a lamp I see  
Pass through the glimmering gloom,  
And flit from room to room.



And slow, as in a dream of bliss,  
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss  
Her shadow, as it falls  
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be  
Opened and then closed suddenly,  
The vision came and went,  
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long  
Hereafter of her speech and song,  
That light its rays shall cast  
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good,  
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here  
The palm, the lily, and the spear,  
The symbols that of yore  
Saint Filomena bore.

## THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS.

---

OTHERE, the old sea-captain,  
Who dwelt in Helgoland,  
To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,  
Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,  
Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,  
Like a boy's his eye appeared ;  
His hair was yellow as hay,  
But threads of a silvery gray  
Gleamed in his tawny beard.

Hearty and hale was Othere,  
His cheek had the color of oak ;  
With a kind of laugh in his speech,  
Like the sea-tide on a beach,  
As unto the King he spoke.

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
Had a book upon his knees,  
And wrote down the wondrous tale  
Of him who was first to sail  
Into the Arctic seas.

“ So far I live to the northward,  
No man lives north of me ;  
To the east are wild mountain-chains,  
And beyond them meres and plains ;  
To the westward all is sea.

“ So far I live to the northward,  
From the harbor of Skeringes-hale,  
If you only sailed by day,  
With a fair wind all the way,  
More than a month would you sail.

“ I own six hundred reindeer,  
With sheep and swine beside ;  
I have tribute from the Finns,  
Whalebone and reindeer-skins,  
And ropes of walrus-hide.

“ I ploughed the land with horses,  
But my heart was ill at ease,  
For the old seafaring men  
Came to me now and then,  
With their sagas of the seas ;—

“Of Iceland and of Greenland,  
And the stormy Hebrides,  
And the undiscovered deep;—  
I could not eat nor sleep  
For thinking of those seas.

“To the northward stretched the desert,  
How far I fain would know;  
So at last I sallied forth,  
And three days sailed due north,  
As far as the whale-ships go.

“To the west of me was the ocean,  
To the right the desolate shore,  
But I did not slacken sail  
For the walrus or the whale,  
Till after three days more.

“The days grew longer and longer,  
Till they became as one,  
And southward through the haze  
I saw the sullen blaze  
Of the red midnight sun.

“And then uprose before me,  
Upon the water’s edge,  
The huge and haggard shape  
Of that unknown North Cape,  
Whose form is like a wedge.

“The sea was rough and stormy,  
The tempest howled and wailed,  
And the sea-fog, like a ghost,  
Haunted that dreary coast,  
But onward still I sailed.

“Four days I steered to eastward,  
Four days without a night;  
Round in a fiery ring  
Went the great sun, O King,  
With red and lurid light.”

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
Ceased writing for a while;  
And raised his eyes from his book,  
With a strange and puzzled look,  
And an incredulous smile.

But Othere, the old sea-captain,  
He neither paused nor stirred,  
Till the King listened, and then  
Once more took up his pen,  
And wrote down every word.



“And now the land,” said Othere,

“Bent southward suddenly,

And I followed the curving shore

And ever southward bore

Into a nameless sea.

“And there we hunted the walrus,

The narwhale, and the seal;

Ha! ’t was a noble game!

And like the lightning’s flame

Flew our harpoons of steel.

“There were six of us all together,

Norsemen of Helgoland;

In two days and no more

We killed of them threescore,

And dragged them to the strand!”

Here Alfred the Truth-Teller  
Suddenly closed his book,  
And lifted his blue eyes,  
With doubt and strange surmise  
Depicted in their look.

And Othere the old sea-captain  
Stared at him wild and weird,  
Then smiled, till his shining teeth  
Gleamed white from underneath  
His tawny, quivering beard.

And to the King of the Saxons,  
In witness of the truth,  
Raising his noble head,  
He stretched his brown hand, and said,  
“Behold this walrus-tooth!”

DAYBREAK.

---

A WIND came up out of the sea,  
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,  
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,  
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!  
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,  
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,  
Your clarion blow ; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,  
"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,  
"Awake, O bell ! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,  
And said, "Not yet ! in quiet lie."

## THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ.

May 28, 1857.  

---

It was fifty years ago

In the pleasant month of May,  
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,  
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took  
The child upon her knee,  
Saying : " Here is a story-book  
Thy Father has written for thee."

“Come, wander with me,” she said,  
“Into regions yet untrod ;  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God.”

And he wandered away and away  
With Nature, the dear old nurse,  
Who sang to him night and day  
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,  
Or his heart began to fail,  
She would sing a more wonderful song,  
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,  
And will not let him go,  
Though at times his heart beats wild  
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud ;

Though at times he hears in his dreams

    The Ranz des Vaches of old,

And the rush of mountain streams

    From glaciers clear and cold ;

And the mother at home says, “ Hark !

    For his voice I listen and yearn ;

It is growing late and dark,

    And my boy does not return ! ”

## CHILDREN.



COME to me, O ye children !

For I hear you at your play,  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,  
That look towards the sun,  
Where thoughts are singing swallows  
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,  
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,  
But in mine is the wind of Autumn,  
And the first fall of the snow.



Ah ! what would the world be to us  
If the children were no more ?  
We should dread the desert behind us  
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,  
With light and air for food,  
Ere their sweet and tender juices  
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children ;  
Through them it feels the glow  
Of a brighter and sunnier climate  
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children !  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,  
And the wisdom of our books,  
When compared with your caresses,  
And the gladness of your looks ?

Ye are better than all the ballads  
That ever were sung or said ;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead.

## SANDALPHON.



HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,  
In the Legends the Rabbins have told  
Of the limitless realms of the air,—  
Have you read it,—the marvellous story  
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,  
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates  
Of the City Celestial he waits,  
With his feet on the ladder of light,  
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,  
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered  
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire  
Chaunt only one hymn, and expire  
    With the song's irresistible stress ;  
Expire in their rapture and wonder,  
As harp-strings are broken asunder  
    By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,  
Unmoved by the rush of the song,  
    With eyes unimpassioned and slow,  
Among the dead angels, the deathless  
Sandalphon stands listening breathless  
    To sounds that ascend from below ;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,  
From the souls that entreat and implore  
    In the fervor and passion of prayer ;

.

From the hearts that are broken with losses,  
And weary with dragging the crosses  
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,  
And they change into flowers in his hands,  
Into garlands of purple and red ;  
And beneath the great arch of the portal,  
Through the streets of the City Immortal  
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—  
A fable, a phantom, a show,  
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore ;  
Yet the old mediæval tradition,  
The beautiful, strange superstition,  
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,  
And the welkin above is all white,  
All throbbing and panting with stars,  
Among them majestic is standing  
Sandalphon the angel, expanding  
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part  
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,  
The frenzy and fire of the brain,  
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,  
The golden pomegranates of Eden,  
To quiet its fever and pain.

## EPIMETHEUS,

OR THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT.

---

HAVE I dreamed ? or was it real,

What I saw as in a vision,

When to marches hymeneal,

In the land of the ideal,

Moved my thought o'er fields Elysian ?

What ! are these the guests whose glances

Seemed like sunshine gleaming round me ;

These the wild, bewildered fancies,

That with dithyrambic dances,

As with magic circles, bound me ?

Ah ! how cold are their caresses !

Pallid cheeks and haggard bosoms !  
Spectral gleam their snow-white dresses,  
And from loose, dishevelled tresses  
Fall the hyacinthine blossoms !

O my songs ! whose winsome measures  
Filled my heart with secret rapture !  
Children of my golden leasures !  
Must even your delights and pleasures  
Fade and perish with the capture ?

Fair they seemed, those songs sonorous,  
When they came to me unbidden ;  
Voices single, and in chorus,  
Like the wild birds singing o'er us  
In the dark of branches hidden.



Disenchantment ! Dis-illusion !

Must each noble aspiration  
Come at last to this conclusion,  
Jarring discord, wild confusion,  
Lassitude, renunciation ?

Not with steeper fall nor faster,  
From the sun's serene dominions,  
Not through brighter realms nor vaster,  
In swift ruin and disaster  
Icarus fell with shattered pinions !

Sweet Pandora ! dear Pandora !  
Why did mighty Jove create thee  
Coy as Thetis, fair as Flora,  
Beautiful as young Aurora,  
If to win thee is to hate thee ?

No, not hate thee ! for this feeling  
Of unrest and long resistance  
Is but passionate appealing,  
A prophetic whisper stealing  
O'er the chords of our existence.

Him whom thou dost once enamour,  
Thou, beloved, never leavest ;  
In life's discord, strife, and clamor,  
Still he feels thy spell of glamour ;  
Him of Hope thou ne'er bereavest.

Weary hearts by thee are lifted,  
Struggling souls by thee are strengthened,  
Clouds of fear asunder rifted,  
Truth from falsehood cleansed and sifted,  
Lives, like days in summer, lengthened.

Therefore art thou ever dearer,

O my Sibyl, my deceiver !

For thou makest each mystery clearer,

And the unattained seems nearer

When thou fillest my heart with fever !

Muse of all the Gifts and Graces !

Though the fields around us wither,

There are ampler realms and spaces,

Where no foot has left its traces ;

Let us turn and wander thither.



NOTES.



## NOTES.

---

PAGE 4. *The sword of Damascus.*

STANDISH's sword is still preserved at Plymouth, with an Arabic inscription on the back, showing it to be a "Damascus blade." His coat of mail, when taken out of an old box and touched, crumbled to dust.

---

PAGE 8. *Lies buried Rose Standish.*

The first winter's mortality among the settlers was very great. Among the victims "died Rose Standish, wife of Captain Standish, on January 29th."

---

PAGE 40. *Why don't you speak for yourself, John?*

*Olivia.* O by your leave, I pray you ;  
I bade you never speak again of him ;  
But would you undertake another suit,  
I had rather hear you to solicit that  
Than music from the spheres.

*Twelfth Night, Act III. Scene 1.*

PAGE 58. *The sailing of the May Flower.*

After remaining one hundred and ten days in Plymouth Harbor, this historical and gallant little ship returned to England in the month of April, 1621 ; and notwithstanding their great sufferings, all the Pilgrims remained at their posts, not one asked to re-embark.

---

PAGE 72. *The Field of the First Encounter.*

This name was given to the scene of the skirmish, in which the intrepidity of Standish and his little band proved more than a match for an assault of the Indians.

---

PAGE 96. *But their sachem, the brave Wattawamat, Fled not ; he was dead.*

“But it is incredible how many wounds these two princes (braves), Pecksuot and Wattawamat, received before they died, not making any fearful noise, but catching at their weapons, and striving to the last.”—*Journal of the Colonists.*

---

PAGE 108. *Yes ; Miles Standish was dead.*

Standish had a very narrow escape from an assassin. A wily Indian, “a notable insulting villain,” persuaded the



Captain and his party to land at his village, with the intent to murder them, but a contrary wind prevented their touching at the place.

---

PAGE 130. *That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder.*

The words of St. Augustine are, "De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus."

Sermon III. *De Ascensione.*

---

PAGE 134. THE PHANTOM SHIP.

A detailed account of this "apparition of a Ship in the Air" is given by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi*, Book I. Chap. VI. It is contained in a letter from the Rev. James Pierpont, Pastor of New Haven. To this account Mather adds these words:—

"Reader, there being yet living so many credible gentlemen, that were eyewitnesses of this wonderful thing, I venture to publish it for a thing as undoubted as 't is wonderful."

---

PAGE 148. *And the Emperor but a Macho.*

*Macho*, in Spanish, signifies a mule. *Golondrina* is the feminine form of *Golondrino*, a swallow, and also a cant name for a deserter.

## PAGE 162. OLIVER BASSELIN.

Oliver Basselin, the "*Père joyeux du Vaudeville*," flourished in the fifteenth century, and gave to his convivial songs the name of his native valleys, in which he sang them, Vaux-de-Vire. This name was afterwards corrupted into the modern *Vaudeville*.

---

## PAGE 167. VICTOR GALBRAITH.

This poem is founded on fact. Victor Galbraith was a bugler in a company of volunteer cavalry; and was shot in Mexico for some breach of discipline. It is a common superstition among soldiers, that no balls will kill them unless their names are written on them. The old proverb says, "Every bullet has its billet."

---

PAGE 173. *I remember the sea-fight far away.*

This was the engagement between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, off the harbor of Portland, in which both captains were slain. They were buried side by side, in the cemetery on Mountjoy.

---

## PAGE 191. SANTA FILOMENA.

"At Pisa the church of San Francisco contains a chapel dedicated lately to Santa Filomena; over the altar is a

picture, by Sabatelli, representing the Saint as a beautiful nymph-like figure, floating down from heaven, attended by two angels bearing the lily, palm, and javelin, and beneath in the foreground the sick and maimed, who are healed by her intercession."—*Mrs. Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art*, ii. 298.



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